

State rep. wants to abolish county government system

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One local politician is calling for action to be taken

Newport to abolish the county form of government in the state because she believes it has outlived its usefulness.

"There should be a

committee formed to look at getting rid of county government," said state Rep. Beverly Rodeschin, R-Newport.

The biggest stumbling block, according to Rodeschin, would be transferring all the costs associated with the county to the state.

For example, Rodeschin said the sher-

iff's department could be transferred to the court system, the county attorney could be overseen by the state attorney, the jail would become part of state corrections and the nursing home could be privatized.

"The state would have to come up with all of these costs," Rodeschin

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said. "But there wouldn't be any county tax."

Rodeschin said that by privatizing the nursing home, the state could save money since other private nursing homes appear to be doing well financially.

"I look at other homes and they're doing fine," Rodeschin said.

"It will still be there. They will still get Medicare and Medicaid money. It will still be a safety net."

State Rep. Sue Gottling, D-Sunapee, does not believe there is enough support in the state to abolish the county system.

"I think it would be difficult to enact legislation," Gottling said. "The Legislature would need some convincing."

Gottling served on a task force to study county government, which included people from all over the state.

"The upshot of the two-year study was most people in most counties were satisfied with the way things are going," Gottling said. "Obviously everybody is concerned what will happen in the future."

Gottling said the study concluded there was little dissatisfaction with the current system.

"The conclusion is there is no drumbeat for drastic change," Gottling said.

But Rodeschin would like to have the system looked at again.

"We have a very weak county system," Rodeschin said. "Nobody wants to take a serious look at it."

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